

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 2
290 BROADWAY
NEW YORK, NY 10007-1866

DEC - 8 2011

Honorable Luis Fortuño Burset
Governor of Puerto Rico
BMB 110202
Calle San Gustos
San Juan, Puerto Rico 00901-1711

Dear Governor Fortuño Burset:

Thank you for your recommendations dated February 4, 2009 on air quality designations for the revised 2008 National Ambient Air Quality Standards for ozone throughout Puerto Rico. I appreciate the information you shared with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as we move forward to improve ozone air quality. This letter is to notify you that EPA's preliminary response to your recommendations is to approve your request for Puerto Rico to be declared attainment of the 2008 ozone standard, and to inform you of our approach for completing the designations.

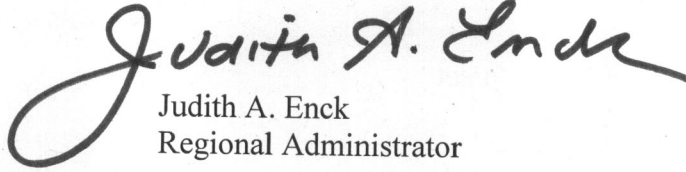
On March 12, 2008, the EPA revised its national ambient air quality standards for ground-level ozone to provide increased protection of public health and the environment. The EPA lowered the primary 8-hour ozone standard from 0.08 parts per million (ppm) to 0.075 ppm to protect against health effects associated with ozone exposure, including a range of serious respiratory illnesses and increased premature death from heart or lung disease. The EPA revised the secondary 8-hour ozone standard, making it identical to the primary standard, to protect against welfare effects, including impacts on sensitive vegetation and forested ecosystems.

As required by the Clean Air Act, the EPA will designate an area as nonattainment if it is violating the 2008 ozone standards or contributing to a violation of the standards in a nearby area. Consistent with designations for previous ozone standards, the EPA intends to designate an area as unclassifiable/attainment if there are certified, quality-assured air quality monitoring data showing the area is meeting the ozone standards. The EPA also intends to designate areas as unclassifiable/attainment if there are no monitoring data for the area, and the EPA has not made a determination that the area is contributing to a violation in a nearby area.

After considering Puerto Rico's February 4, 2009 ozone designation recommendations and other relevant technical information, including 2008-2010 air quality data, the EPA intends to designate all of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico as "unclassifiable/attainment." If Puerto Rico has additional information that you would like the EPA to consider, please submit it to us by February 29, 2012. The EPA will also make its preliminary designation decisions and supporting documentation available to the general public for review and comment. We will be announcing a 30-day public comment period shortly in the *Federal Register*. After considering additional information we receive, the EPA plans to promulgate final ozone designations in spring of 2012.

We look forward to a continued dialogue with you and your staff as we work together to implement the 2008 ozone standards. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me, or have your staff contact Raymond Werner, Chief of the Air Programs Branch, at 212 637-3706.

Sincerely,



Judith A. Enck
Regional Administrator

cc: Mr. Pedro Nieves Miranda, President
Puerto Rico Environmental Quality Board
Mr. Luis R. Sierra Torres, P.E., Air Quality Area Manager
Puerto Rico Environmental Quality Board
Gina McCarthy, Assistant Administrator for Air and Radiation
Steve Page, Director, Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards